

# The National Poll on Healthy Aging: Elevating the Perspectives of Older Adults

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INSTITUTE FOR HEALTHCARE  
POLICY AND INNOVATION  
**NATIONAL POLL  
ON HEALTHY AGING**  
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

The [National Poll on Healthy Aging \(NPHA\)](#) is a recurring, nationally representative household survey of U.S. adults age 50 and older. It offers important insights into the health and well-being of older adults in the U.S., including their experiences, perspectives, and preferences regarding health and health care. Together with the companion [Michigan Poll on Healthy Aging](#), the polls' monthly reports and articles, publicly available datasets, and widely cited findings across major media outlets provide timely, valuable data to inform health care practice, public health, research, and policymaking to support healthy aging both nationally and in Michigan.

## A trusted tool developed through strong partnerships

In 2017, the [University of Michigan \(U-M\) Institute for Healthcare Policy and Innovation \(IHPI\)](#), with support from AARP and the Michigan Medicine Department of Communications, developed and launched the NPHA to gain a deeper understanding of the health and health care issues affecting older adults and their caregivers, and better inform national health care research, policy, and practice.

IHPI unites 800+ faculty researchers across diverse disciplines at U-M, the nation's largest public research university, harnessing broad expertise to collaboratively address the most challenging issues facing U.S. health care. A [team of IHPI faculty and staff](#) with deep expertise in health, aging, and survey research directs the poll, and over [80 IHPI members](#) have contributed their expertise as poll collaborators.

Since its launch nine years ago, the NPHA has become a well-respected and widely cited source of information for older adults and caregivers, advocates, health care providers, media outlets, policymakers, and other stakeholders who rely on the poll to inform decision-making, planning, and public dialogue about aging and health.

Building off the success of the national poll, IHPI launched the [Michigan Poll on Healthy Aging](#) in May 2024 with support from the Michigan Health Endowment Fund to gather data from older Michiganders and inform policy, planning, and practice across the state.

Beginning in 2025, the National Poll on Healthy Aging collaborated with the Alzheimer's Association on a brain health poll to be released in 2026.

## A timely and rich source of data

The NPHA team and IHPI faculty collaborate to develop survey questions around a broad range of health and health care topics. NPHA surveys are administered twice per year to a diverse, nationally representative sample of more than 2,000 U.S. adults age 50 and older from NORC at the University of Chicago's [AmeriSpeak@](#) panel. The Michigan poll includes a diverse, representative sample of over 1,000 Michiganders age 50 and older from across the state.

To date, the poll team has fielded 18 NPHA surveys; [14 waves of data have been made publicly available](#) at no cost through the National Archive of Computerized Data on Aging's (NACDA) Open Aging Repository. This repository is based at the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR), a data collection and curation center within U-M's renowned Institute for Social Research (ISR). There have been more than 2,400 downloads of these datasets by researchers worldwide.

For the Michigan Poll on Healthy Aging, the poll team shares state-level findings, along with comparisons to national data, through [10 online interactive data dashboards](#) with more than 4,000 cumulative views as well as data reports designed to inform journalists, policymakers, and other state leaders.

## Effective dissemination of results

The NPHA team has produced [more than 70 national reports](#) and [11 Michigan articles](#) based on poll data covering a wide range of topics. Reports are made publicly available online and distributed widely, shedding light on crucial issues like family caregiving, driving, technology use and health, health care decision-making, loneliness and social isolation, ageism, mental and oral health, aging in place, and more. Michigan poll articles highlight findings

from older adults in Michigan and compare their responses to older adults in the rest of the U.S.

The NPHA team has also created [nearly 25 “poll extras”](#): short, engaging articles that utilize NPHA data to answer timely questions in health and health care. Poll extras are possible because of the depth and richness of poll data and allow the team to be responsive to emerging topics by offering new, relevant findings that go beyond the focus of NPHA reports, such as older adults’ knowledge of palliative and hospice care or intentions about getting vaccinated against flu and COVID-19.

IHPI researchers have used poll data to develop [nearly 50 peer-reviewed academic publications](#), one-third of which had a first author who was a student or trainee, in high-profile journals, including the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*, *Annals of Internal Medicine*, *JAMA Network Open*, and the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*.

To further amplify the dissemination of poll results, the team has also developed multiple “patient pages” for the [Michigan Medicine Health Lab](#) and for the JAMA Network sites, with actionable information for older adults and their families.

The NPHA team also routinely disseminates poll findings via presentations at national, state, and local events and meetings.

## Broad reach with key audiences

NPHA findings have been featured hundreds of times across major media outlets, including *The New York Times*, *US News & World Report*, *CNN*, *NPR*, *Politico*, *The Washington Post*, *HealthDay News*, *Newsweek*, *People*, *Reuters*, *Forbes*, *NBC News*, *Consumer Reports*, *Fortune*, and *USA Today*. NPHA results have also been covered widely in more specialized professional publications such as *CIDRAP News* and *McKnight’s Senior Living*, and in Michigan media outlets like *Detroit Free Press*, *Bridge Michigan*, *WEMU-FM* and *WDIV-TV Detroit*.

In 2025, the poll’s website received over 109,000 views, and press releases issued in 2025 about poll reports, papers, and poll extras garnered a cumulative 117,500 views.

The NPHA team has produced and disseminated [nearly 25 videos](#) including an [overview of the poll](#), a tutorial on [using poll data](#), and a [webinar](#) featuring Michigan experts based on the long-term care poll findings. Collectively, these videos have generated more than 41,000 views on YouTube.

NPHA reports and poll extras reach broad audiences through U-M communications channels, including the daily Michigan Health Lab blog, Michigan Medicine social media, and the U-M Alumni Association Education Gateway, curated for U-M’s 640,000+ alumni and also accessible to the general public.

Since 2023, the NPHA team and the Michigan Medicine Department of Communication have produced twelve broadcast clip packages for local and regional news stations with video segments featuring poll data. These broadcast clip packages have formed the basis for more than 150 documented stories on 16 stations across 13 markets in the Midwest, and several markets in Florida and Texas, reaching more than 5 million people.

## Poll evidence informs policymaking

The NPHA has played a pivotal role in informing policies aimed at enhancing the well-being of older adults across the nation. NPHA data have been cited in congressional testimonies in the U.S. House and Senate, in the introduction of federal legislation, and as part of a major policy proposal of a presidential candidate.

The poll team communicates with bipartisan legislative staff at the federal level, ensuring that policymakers have access to the latest evidence to guide decision-making.

## Looking to the future

The NPHA has fully established itself as a trusted and valued source of information about the health and aging experiences and perspectives of adults age 50 and older across the country and the state of Michigan. As ongoing and emerging challenges affect the nation’s growing older population and the health systems that care for them, the NPHA provides critical insights from older adults that can advance policy, public health, and health care innovations to support healthy aging and the delivery of age-friendly care. Looking ahead, the National Poll on Healthy Aging is committed to elevating the voices of older adults and expanding its impact in the years to come.

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Our mission is to foster innovative, interdisciplinary research to inform policies and practices that advance the equity, quality, safety, and affordability of healthcare, and improve health for individuals, families, and communities.

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